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and knocked out of shape by a blow or if its owner goes through thorny bushes. A *khehla* who has some self-respect will frequently polish and repair this valuable ornament, for it is a sign of mature age. He who has been ordered by the chief to wear it no longer carries burdens on his head; his crown would be spoilt! He will be accompanied by a boy who carries his parcels; he himself will only carry his stick or his assagai. He will at once be known as one of the mature men of the tribe. This is not to say that the mere fact of wearing the *ngiyana* gives the right of taking part in the important affairs of the country; the counsellors alone possess this right; but from amongst the " crowned, " will be chosen the man who is sent to another chief to treat of political questions, for instance.

When the hair grows (for, though it is curly, it may become long), the crown rises with it and becomes more or less unsteady, which must be most uncomfortable! The best thing would be to cut the ornament off and then replace it. Mr. Mandjia, one of our neighbours at Rikatla, was probably too lazy to undertake this job, so he put a small red handkerchief between his skull and the crown to prevent it from wobbling.

At a certain time all the *ngiyana* disappeared from the land of Nondwane. The chief Mapunga was dead! The loss, kept secret for a year, had been made public, and the law requires all the mature men to take off their crowns when the sovereign of the country is dead. They take the wax from the frame, and make a ball of it; this they fix on a little stick, and place this stick in the roof of their hut above the door. The frame is hung up quite close by, and they leave these objects there till the new chief orders his subjects to re-make their crowns. This shows clearly that the crowning custom is in close relation with the national life of the tribe. The " makhehla " also form special battalions in the army.

Nowadays, however, this custom is not observed as religiously as in bygone times. Life is harder, one must go and earn pounds sterling in the port of Lourenço Marques, or in the gold mines, and one can no longer indulge in a lazy life! It may therefore happen that a poor man will refuse to wear the crown, and say to

643 Gigiseka. The last named was very courageous, and the cunning Maphunga succeeded in poisoning him treacherously, through the agency of a dissolute woman.

E. DEATH.

643 When a chief has grown very old, he no longer goes out of
[763] the royal hut. His counsellors take his place in the management
766 of affairs and he dies surrounded by mystery. It must be so, as his death must remain unknown during a whole year. "We reap and we bow down (korama)" viz. "we till the ground and reap again before the event is made public (palusha)" says Mankhelu.

So the chief is buried during the night ; no lamentations are heard ; his wives and his grave-diggers undergo the purification ceremonies and take the vapour baths in secret. It may be that the wives who dwell in remote places will not hear a word of their husband's death. The fire of the royal hut will not be kindled in the usual and ritual way, but it will be kept burning the whole year. The decease is formally announced to some few individuals, to the White Government officials, to the heir (who views the corpse), and to the counsellors, but the rest of the country is supposed to be in ignorance of the occurrence. Of course the secret will not be kept absolutely. The truth will leak out... But no one will dare to speak openly on the subject (1).

643 A special hut is set apart into which the counsellors enter under
645 pretext of discussing matters of state with the chief, who is said to be very ill and unable to show himself. As a matter of fact, he has been buried for some time.

(1) I was staying at Nondwane when Mapunga, the chief who preceded Mahazule, died, and I heard on several occasions, in June and July 1891, the warriors practising on their antelope horns the airs to be played when the mourning should be made public. The death must have occurred during 1890, but nothing was said about it. After the news had been published, Mangasyele, a young heathen of the district of Libombo, remarked to me one day: "When last season (about Xmas 1890) we saw the miphimbi (trees bearing fruit similar to an apricot) so heavily laden with fruit, (there had been an exceptionally heavy crop), we felt sure the chief must have died and that he had sent us this plentiful supply.." A typical remark, aptly illustrating the semi-ignorance in which the tribe is kept of the death of the chief.

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643 What is the reason for this silence ? According to the old
643 men I consulted, it is to prevent enemies taking advantage of the
766 confusion consequent on the death of the chief to attack the country. Undoubtedly this custom is also intended to give the principal counsellors time to prepare for the installation of the new chief and to prevent bloody contests.

643 The grave of the chief does not differ from those of his subjects.
766 As it has been dug secretly in the sacred wood (ntimu), its whereabouts are not known to most of the people. In some clans or sub-clans the earth of the tumulus is levelled, so that no sign whatever remains to show where the body has been buried. This is said to be done in order to prevent enemies from exhuming the corpse and cutting off the ears, the diaphragm and other parts of the body to make powerful war-charms (See Chapter IV). The graves of the chiefs of Nondwane are said to be invisible, just like the hut of the nyokwekulu. They are known by Magomanyana alone (Mboza). (Magomanyana is the nearest relative of the late Maphunga, the only brother whom he spared).

When the year of secrecy is over, the official proclamation of the mourning is made. (Ba palusha nkosi.) The people come to the capital, clan after clan, sounding their fanfares on trumpets of antelope horns (bunanga, see Chapter III), and bringing with them an ox or a goat. These animals are slaughtered and their bladders are presented to the heir, who pins them into his hair, so that, without any official proclamation having been made, every warrior at once recognises the future chief. All heads are shaven in sign of mourning, the adult men remove their wax crown (p. 129) and the people are clothed in *malopa* (a blue cloth) ; but as the death is not of recent date and has been known more or less for some time, the outward manifestations of grief are reduced to a minimum and dances follow in their train. The delegates from the adjoining countries also come to express their condolences. When all have paid their respects, the mourning is really ended (nkosi wu yu !). The King is dead, long live the King !

As we saw, amongst the Nkunas the proclamation of the death of a chief is made on the same day as the installation of his successor.

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B. COURT PERSONAGES.

644 Amongst those most frequently seen at the Court, must be mentioned the Counsellors, the Favourites, the Herald and the Official Vituperator.

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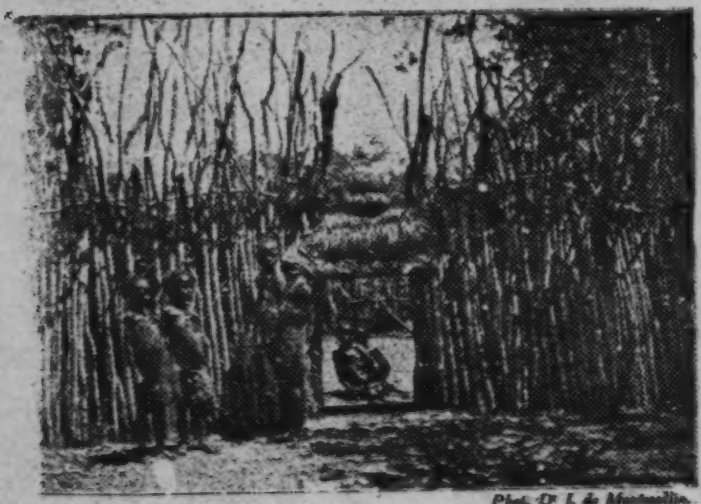

Phot. Dr J. de Monteiller.

Back gate.

The Counsellors.

645 The Counsellors, tindjuna (1), constitute a Cabinet which assists the chief in carrying on the functions of Royalty. There are several grades of these functionaries; first the Principal Counsellors (letikulu) whose province it is to discuss and decide

(1) The Zulu word *induna* is well known and has been more or less adopted in current speech in South Africa. The Thonga form is ndjuna, pl. tindjuna. I employ both these forms indiscriminately.

645 the more serious questions which affect the country. These are generally the uncles of the chief, or men of riper age from the collateral branches of his family. In Nondwane, during the war of 1894, it was Magomanyana and Mundulukele, brothers of the late Maphunga, uncles of the then reigning chief Mahazule, and later on Nwakubyele, who had charge of the interests of the eastern portion of the country, together with Nwambalane.

Sambana, Chief of the Mahlalele clan, with his Counsellors (N.E. Transvaal).

These tindjuna watch over the chief, and have the right of finding fault with him if they are not satisfied with his conduct.

In the second place come the Military Counsellors, the Generals of the army (tindjuna ta yimpi) who direct fighting operations, (Shitlenwana in Nondwane, Mpompi and Mahagane in Zihlahla).

Then there are Counsellors who are especially entrusted with the business of the adjoining countries, whom we might call Agents General, one being appointed to represent each country. We have already seen that these officials form an indispensable link in the diplomatic, and even in the matrimonial relations, between one kingdom and another.

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645 If these men are intelligent, they acquire great influence with the chief and may even be able to impose their will upon him. This was the case in September 1894, when the young king Ñwamantibyane was prevented by his counsellors from obeying the summons of the Portuguese Government, who claimed his assistance in fighting Mahazule (See App. XI). They often act as a useful counterpoise to the autocratic power of the chief.

Lastly we find another category of Counsellors, those appointed by the chief in the various districts to act as overseers or magistrates, to adjudicate the petty differences of the people; they must refer to the capital all important affairs (timhaka), the quarrels which the head of the village is unable to settle, and all matters which can only be judged by the chief, to whom they are of the greatest assistance in his decisions, being past masters in the art of Bantu reasoning.

The tindjuna are thus a complete organisation, as necessary to the chief as they are to the orderly development of tribal life.

II. *The Favourites, or Messengers.*

644 177 When the chief is crowned while still young, he gathers around him a circle of personal friends of his own age who are called *tinxeluva*. This is a Zulu word, and it would seem that this custom has been borrowed from the Zulu court procedure. In Ronga they are called *tinyumi*, which means messengers, and they generally build a *lao*, viz., a bachelor's house, near the capital, to be ready to answer any call. They partake in the games of their royal comrade and also in his feasts, but they have no official authority.

III. *The Herald.*

On one occasion I happened to be the guest, together with one of my colleagues, of the chief Ñwamantibyane, long before there was any question of the war of Lourenço Marques. Stretched in

202 726 will at once go and undo the trap which is on their side ; in the morning, the people of Nondwane will know that they must also fly.

D. THE TRIBUNAL OF THE CHIEF.

642 In the Thonga Court there is no separation of powers. The legislative, executive, and judicial powers are all in the hands of the chief, aided by his counsellors. The chief is the supreme authority and his decisions are without appeal.

I. *Legislative affairs.*

671 643 The *chief* makes the laws (p. 382) and presides at discussions which end in a resolution. But his counsellors assist him.

583 Here is an example of such a decision taken at Maphunga's court. There was no uniformity as to the money to be paid for a lobolo, and some fathers claimed as much as £ 20 or £ 30 for their daughters. The great counsellors of the capital decided (tjimba mhaka, viz., to tie the matter) that a lobolo should be £ 15.10 as the maximum. They "tied the matter" with the assent of the chief. Then all the sub-chiefs and counsellors were summoned to the capital. The chief called the roll to ascertain if they were all present. The great counsellor then said to the assembly : "The herds which people claim are too large. Have you gold mines and do you know how to make coins ? Henceforth do not lobola with too much money. £ 15.10 is quite enough!" Every sub-chief, on his return home, called his men and informed them of the decision : "Hi to timhaka! Such are the matters!" said they. The subjects were disappointed. They wept! But they had to accept the decision. To oppose it is taboo! "Psa yila!"

643 645 671 A *native debate* or discussion is conducted on very different lines from those to which we are generally accustomed, nothing ever being put to the vote. The chief presides. A proposition is

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643 put forward in short sentences, generally interrogative, by one of
645 the counsellors. The assembly listens in silence until the mover
671 concludes with an energetic "Ahina," being the equivalent of "That's all right." (See p. 354.) Another individual elaborates the matter further, saying: "Did you not hear what he said? He said so and so." This is the way of seconding the motion. The debate proceeds, and, little by little, objections are brought forward and the assembly comes to a decision.

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Phot. A. Burd.
An habitué of the Nkuna Court.

It often happens that the chief does not say a word; when he see that the counsellors are agreed and if he has no objection, he merely shows his assent by nodding his head. So the decision is arrived at without his intervention and without any vote being taken. The voice of the majority has not been ascertained by any show of hands, but it is generally perceived by intuition in a very remarkable way, and grave counsellors, who have been squatting in a circle all through the discussion, jump to their feet and disperse, knowing perfectly well what has been decided. If however the counsellors do not agree, they put the matter into the hands of the chief, and the chief, after having listened to the arguments pro and con, "cuts the matter" (tjema mhaka) by some short sentences, after which everybody must shout the royal salutation: "Bayete!"

643 When there are two parties present, the debate is conducted
609 according to other rules. For instance, if a stranger wishes to
645 have speech with a chief or to proffer some request, he is generally
671 accompanied by a counsellor. The chief, together with some of his men, receives him either in the hut, if the affair must

643 be secret, or on the square, if there is no objection to making it
609 public. The chief and his men sit on one side, the visitor on
645 the other; if he wishes to conform strictly to all the laws of
671 etiquette, he will first explain the matter to his own Agent General, who will communicate with the chief's special counsellor, repeating the words of the visitor, sentence by sentence; the counsellor will, in his turn, communicate with the chief, again telling him the whole story, as if he had not heard a word of it before. The affair will thus have passed through three hands and the answer should, in due formality, be given through the same channels. These precautions, which seem eminently superfluous, even somewhat ridiculous, to a person unacquainted with Bantu etiquette, evidently proceed from the fact that there are no stenographers or secretaries to furnish any written record of the proceedings, so that it is necessary to have as many witnesses as possible and that these should thoroughly understand the matter under consideration.

II. *Judicial Cases.*

1) Sense of justice.

671 As has often been remarked, the Bantus possess a strong sense
183 of justice. They believe in social order and in the observance
641 of the laws and, though these laws are not written, they are
609 universal and perfectly well known. The law is the custom,
554 that which has always been done. The old men, the counsellors and more particularly the counsellors of the capital, are those who can speak authoritatively. But everybody is welcome in the *hubo*, where matters are discussed; even a stranger can take part in the discussion. "No one is excluded, if he speaks rightly; only fools, those who do not know anything" (Mankhelu).

671 This participation in the discussions of the hubo has developed
644 the sense of law to a wonderful extent amongst the Bantus. They
192 are all born advocates and judges, and take a great interest in this business! No wonder therefore that the Thonga vocabulary